



# The Feedline

## FCC Denies Petitions to Bring Back Morse Code Testing

*From the ARRL Letter  
Vol. 27, No 8*

In a [Memorandum Opinion and Order](#) (MOO) released February 28, the FCC denied two petitions calling for General or Amateur Extra license applicants to demonstrate proficiency in Morse code. In December 2006, the FCC released a [Report and Order](#) (R&O) in the Morse code proceeding, WT Docket 05-235, that eliminated Morse code testing as of February 23, 2007.

The R&O amended Section 97.501 to remove the telegraphy requirement. In reaching this decision, the FCC noted in the R&O that “one of the fundamental purposes underlying our Part 97 rules is to accommodate amateur radio operators’ ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art, and that the Commission had previously concluded that an individual’s ability to demonstrate Morse code proficiency is not necessarily indicative of his or her ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art.” The FCC also noted that another fundamental purpose underlying Part 97 rules is “to enhance the value of the amateur service to the public, particularly with respect to emergency communications, and that the Commission had previously concluded that most emergency communication today is performed using voice, data, or video modes, because information can be exchanged much faster using modes of communication other than telegraphy.”

The Commission therefore concluded that requiring an individual to demonstrate

Morse code proficiency as a licensing requirement “did not further the purposes of the Part 97 rules.” The Commission also found that this reasoning applied equally to the General Class and the Amateur Extra Class, so “it rejected suggestions that the Morse code requirement be eliminated for the General Class license but retained for the Amateur Extra Class license.”

In the wake of the FCC’s actions in WT Docket 05-235, two amateurs submitted separate petitions to the FCC, asking them to bring back the testing. Anthony R. Gordon, KG6EQM, of West Covina California, objected to the FCC eliminating the telegraphy examination element as an examination requirement for the Amateur Extra Class operator license. Russell D. Ward, W4NI, of Nashville, Tennessee, requested the FCC reconsider their decision for “strictly procedural” reasons.

Gordon asserts that “the failure to keep the Morse code telegraphy requirement intact, at least as a required examination element for the Amateur Extra Class operator license, fails to take into consideration the significant national security implications that require retaining adequate examination safeguards to insure the viability that Morse code telegraphy provides, not only to the Amateur service, but the nation as well.” Gordon argues that the requirement should be retained so that amateur operators can act as “a strategic reserve,” because there is “no assurance that...voice or digital modes

**See “FCC Denies”, page 5**

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### Dates to Remember:

- Mar 10 – Membership Meeting
- Jun 28 – Paddlefest
- Jun 28,29 – Field Day

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## Repeaters — K4CO

147.255+ and 444.350+ Edgewood (PL 123.0), 147.375+ Walton, 146.895+ Highland Heights  
The 147.255 repeater is a linked Echolink node, accessible via N4IJS-R.

## Nets

NKARC Net: Tuesdays, 7:30 PM on the 147.255 repeater

## —WEB Site—

<http://www.k4co.org>

**Membership meetings** on the **2nd Monday** at 7:30 PM, Turkeyfoot Middle School, 3230 Turkeyfoot Rd  
in Edgewood

**Board meetings: TBA**

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# Top of the Tower

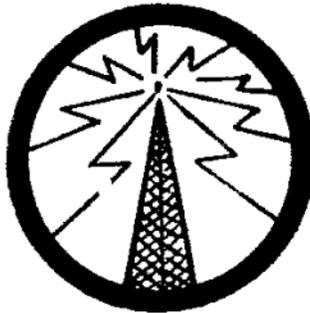
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Hello All,

Our meeting in February was cancelled due to the bad weather, so our agenda for March will remain the same as the scheduled February agenda.

This is the second February meeting that was cancelled due to weather and so it has occurred to me that we should have a plan in place to get the information out. This year to get the information out we used the repeaters and made announcements that the meeting had been cancelled.

Thank you to Dennis Leach and Mike Wagoner for taking the lead on relaying the information. In the future I think it best to place a notice on the web site when we have advanced information. Since our weather here in Kentucky is pretty unpredictable, using the radios & repeaters are



probably our best bet. In the future I would suggest that members check in on the radio before leaving for the meeting for a message on the repeater or other club members giving information every half hour for the hour or two preceding the meeting. If there are any suggestions for a more efficient way of handling cancelled meetings please give your opinions and we can discuss them at the next meeting. We are looking into registering with the local television stations to post cancellations.

Thanks, see you at the next meeting.

Dann C. Fox  
KI4AVO

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## February Net Report

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**If you are interested in helping the club out and expanding your Amateur Radio skill set, please take a turn at running one of our weekly nets! This is a great way to hone your radio, net control, and message handling skills in a friendly environment. If you are interested, please contact Robert Kluck, N4IJS, at (859) 426-5588 or [n4ijs@insightbb.com](mailto:n4ijs@insightbb.com).**

DATE	NCS	CHECKINS	TIME (MINS)	TRAFFIC
2/5/08	AJ4DK (Don)	6	15	0
2/12/08	KB4VKS (Mike)	8	27	0
2/19/08	N4IJS (Robert)	11	30	0
2/26/08	KG4SBG (Dennis)	7	28	0
TOTALS		32	100	0

# Mark's Mutterings

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## Spring is in the Air!

I don't know about you, but I'm tired of the "death by one-inch snowfalls" that has been the story of this winter. As I'm writing this, it's sunny and mild, and I'm jonesing to get out and do some overnight backpacking. As long as nighttime temperatures don't drop too far below freezing, and dry weather is in the forecast, I'm good to go! Spending 24 or 48 hours alone in the great outdoors has an amazing way of ridding my mind and body of the clutter that builds up during day-to-day living.

My favorite destination is Red River Gorge. It's not too far (a 2 hour drive for me) and it's large enough that I can always find a nice quiet and scenic place to pitch my tent and not be bothered by the college party crowd. Other good hiking areas that permit backcountry camping include Mammoth Cave National Park, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area (on the KY/TN border) and Cave Run Lake.

As long as my weight budget allows it (I try to keep my pack weight below 30 pounds), I usually bring along one or two radios. The first is the Yaesu VX-6R handheld that my wife gave me for Christmas last year. It can receive almost any frequency between 500 kHz and 1000 MHz. I'm usually out of range of any repeaters, so I use it mostly to listen to NWS forecasts, and to listen to AM and FM broadcast stations. The second radio is my Elecraft KX-1 CW QRP transceiver. It provides full coverage of the 40, 30 and 20 meter bands. Although it only transmits CW, it can receive SSB transmissions fine, and when I wake up during the night I'll often turn it on and listen in to the late-night ragchewers on 40m. It can also be used for listening to shortwave broadcast stations.

I'm always excited when the latest issue of QST magazine shows up in my mailbox and a new design for a portable antenna is listed in the table of contents. My excitement usually turns to disap-

pointment, since "portable" seldom translates into "backpack-able".

After much trial and error, I've settled on two wire antennas. The first is a simple 33-ft end-fed antenna with a counterpoise. The wire I use is 24-gauge Teflon-insulated stranded wire. This stuff is surprisingly tough, and slips through branches easily. There's no such thing as tangle-proof wire, but this is certainly tangle-resistant! I store the rolled-up wire in a gallon-size zip-lock freezer bag and it takes practically no space in my backpack, and weighs no more than a couple of ounces. It takes just a minute or two to erect, with the far end supported by a tree branch. The antenna tuner that is built into the KX-1 can usually find a good match.

The second antenna is a better performer, but requires a bit more work to erect. It is a 66-ft inverted-V [doublet](#) made of the same wire. What is a doublet? It's a dipole that is operated on a frequency where it is not resonant. My 66-ft doublet is resonant on 40 meters, but non-resonant on 30 and 20. Instead of feeding it with coax, which would have unacceptably high losses due to high SWR on the non-resonant bands, I feed it with open-wire feedline. This feedline is made of the same wire as the antenna, and I use 6-inch pieces of plastic coat-hanger at 2-foot intervals as spacers.

I long ago concluded that trying to erect a temporary dipole flat-top fashion just isn't worth the hassle. I'd rather give up a few dB and only have to worry about getting the center of the antenna up high. I use Cabela's [Ripcord Si](#) fishing line to support the center of the antenna. This fishing line is extremely tough, and its silicone coating allows it to slip easily over tree branches. I tie a 2 oz sinker on the free end of the line and fling it up into the tree. The beauty of having such a lightweight antenna and feedline is that almost any branch will be strong enough to support it. With practice, I can now put this antenna up in about 15 minutes.

73, Mark, AI4BJ

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### **"FCC Denies" continued from Cover**

will even be operationally viable in future emergency communication environments."

The FCC was not persuaded, however, that eliminating the Morse code examination element will affect national security or emergency communications. "We agree with the commenters who point out that requiring applicants to pass a one-time telegraphy examination did not and would not guarantee a supply of skilled telegraphy operators. Moreover, nothing in the Commission's decision prevents an interested amateur radio operator from pursuing Morse code proficiency."

The FCC reiterated their prior conclusion that "an individual's ability to demonstrate Morse code proficiency does not further the underlying purposes of the Part 97 rules, i.e., to accommodate individual contributions to the advancement of the radio art and to enhance the value of the amateur service to the public. Accordingly, we deny the petition."

In the MOO, Ward states that he "encountered difficulty" in submitting his comments and reply comments to the NPRM electronically and that his filings were not posted on the ECFS (the Commission's electronic filing system) until after the deadlines had passed. He asserts that "there is no certainty that the Commission considered his comments and reply comments, that the late posting of his comments prevented others from replying to them, and that it is 'quite likely that other comments were treated improperly.' As a result, Ward requested that the FCC "stay the proceeding, reopen the record and reconsider the NPRM after the close of the extended comment period."

The FCC claims that all comments in the ECFS "were

considered before the Commission adopted the Report and Order, regardless of the how or when they were filed. Moreover, many of the 3900 comments and reply comments expressed the same view as Mr. Ward, so the substance of his views unquestionably was replied to and considered. Finally, he provides no evidence that ECFS mishandled other comments. No other party has complained that his or her comments were not received. We conclude, therefore, that reopening the proceeding for additional comments is not justified, and we deny the petition."

In summary, the FCC said neither petition asserted "any grounds for reconsidering" the decision in the Report and Order. "We believe that the actions taken therein will allow amateur service licensees to better fulfill the purpose of the amateur service, and will enhance the usefulness of the amateur service to the public and licensees."

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### **Paddlefest 2008 Changes Announced**

Paddlefest moves to a new weekend and location for 2008:

Saturday, June 28, 2008

Start: Coney Island

End: Serpentine Wall

Since Paddlefest has grown, the organizers needed a large venue for the participants. The 2008 Paddlefest float will be 8.2 miles. This means NKARC operators must cover a larger stretch of river and more boats. For more information go to [www.ohioriverway.org](http://www.ohioriverway.org).

*Submitted by Lynn Ernst, WD8JAW*

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***The March NKARC membership meeting will include a presentation by Mark Volstad, AI4BJ, on how he uses solar energy to power his portable HF station.***

***Please join us Monday, March 10.***

# Weaver's Words

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**Jim Weaver, K8JE**  
**Great Lakes Division Director, ARRL**  
**E-mail: [k8je@arrl.org](mailto:k8je@arrl.org); Tel.: 513-459-0142**

## ARRL v. FCC

I received a question after the last issue of Words concerning the status of ARRL's suit against the FCC. The situation is that we are on hold. Arguments in the case were heard late last year. This is a "bench" trial -- i.e. there is no jury. The judge will rule on the case.

It often takes several months before a ruling is handed down in cases such as ours. The ruling could come at any time, but don't be surprised if it is not released for a couple of more months.

## Senior dues discount -- more

A point I neglected to make regarding the future of the ARRL Senior Citizen dues discount is that Seniors may renew their memberships using the discount for as many as five years if this is done by the end of 2008. If the details of this multi-year extension have not been announced by the time your renewal comes due, feel free to call toll free at 1-888-277-5289.

## All-risk, all-gear insurance

My guess is that most of us have insurance of some form on our radio equipment. It may be everything that we want. On the other hand, it may be a little lacking.

You may not know that ARRL has had "all-risk" and "all-gear" insurance available to ARRL members for many years. This is the type of insurance that will cover every piece of ham equipment, your computer(s) and the programs used with your ham activities . . . And give you the full replacement value of any insured item that is lost through any accidental occurrence. Yes, I said replacement value. I should also add that people I know who have benefited from this insurance say collecting on it is fully no-hassle.

You can check into this insurance "from the comfort of your own home" by going to [www.arrl.org/FandES/field/regulations/insurance/equipment.html](http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/regulations/insurance/equipment.html). Whether you decide to buy this insurance, it is still a good deal.

## Who is KI8JE?

For our DXers as well as others in the know, KI8JE could be

referred to as a "pirate." In reality, he is a typo. I suspect most of you realize that KI8JE is to whom I said replies to the last Words should be directed. I hope it was obvious that this should have read K8JE.

If you noticed I referred to KI8JE as a pirate and not as a "slim." You who know me, know I could not consider myself a slim!

Oh, yes . . . as of the end of January, there is no KI8JE.

## Complete minutes of January meeting

If you would like to read the complete minutes of the January Board of Directors Meeting, they are posted on the ARRL web site. Simply go to <http://www.arrl.org/announce/board-0801/>. If you have any questions after reading these, let me know.

## Conduct of ARRL Board meetings

I doubt if many readers have looked through the ARRL Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Orders to see how we conduct Board of Directors meetings. With the exception of rules of specific procedure contained in these ARRL documents, meetings are conducted following Roberts' Rules of Order. The difference seen in Board meetings vs. most local club meetings is that the Board has a Parliamentarian who is very knowledgeable in parliamentary procedure. He keeps us on the straight and narrow.

The structure of Board meetings is similar to that of the US House and Senate. Much of the work done by the Board is assigned to standing committees or ad hoc committees. These committees generally work throughout the year to reach recommendations that are made in reports to the Board at each Board meeting. The Board accepts, rejects or modifies committee reports; thereby, adopting or rejecting the provisions contained in them.

The two standing committees of the Board are the Administration & Finance Committee and the Programs & Services Committee. Ad hoc and Advisory Committees come and go; however, the standing committees remain in one form or another over the years.

ARRL Board meetings are set for January and July. The rules typically require them to be held in the vicinity of Newington, CT. They can be moved around the country at the discretion of the Board. This was done for our meeting in January which was held in Houston. Incidentally, the reason for the move to Houston was severe weather that hit Newington the past two years. Weather forced a couple of Board members



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to miss the meeting completely and caused several directors to stay an extra day for the airport to open for their trip home. I was one of the latter Directors.

Housing, and meeting and dining facilities are at a local hotel. When we meet in Newington, committees meet at our HQ building. Rooms at HQ are far too small to host Board sessions or dining.

Before we decided to meet in Houston, the Board set a requirement that the total cost of the meeting there must be essentially the same or less than the cost we would have incurred in Newington.

Standing committees and miscellaneous other meetings take place on Thursday before the Board meeting.

The sequence of events related to actual Board meetings typically begin on Thursday evening with dinner. After dinner, we get together in an informal discussion of one or more topics that are expected to come before the Board on Friday and Saturday. The Board meeting, itself begins on Friday morning and includes the adoption of an agenda. You can see the agenda for this past meeting by reviewing the minutes for it.

In most instances, the meeting ends mid-to-late Saturday afternoon.

### 8th Region Incoming QSL Bureau - 2007

8th Region Incoming QSL bureau Manager Jay Slough, K4ZLE has summarized the activity of this Bureau for 2007. He and the Letter Sorters in 8-land received and redistributed approximately 89,028 overseas QSL cards over the year. This figure compares with 111,734 in 2006, 110,905 in 2005, 138,236 in 2004 and 154,054 handled in 2003. The effect of the bottom of the sun cycle is evident.

Regardless of the lower number of cards processed this past year, the gang at the 8th Region Bureau did a splendid job. This job will start to become larger for the next several years as the new cycle begins to show itself and grows in strength.

I want to thank Jay for his excellent leadership of the Bureau, and for the great work of the letter sorters who have supported him and the Bureau.

Incidentally, the 8th Region Bureau serves only the amateurs who have 8s in their call signs. At one time, of course, this was amateurs in Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia. Now, an amateur's incoming Bureau is the one that has the same number in its name as the amateur's call sign, regardless of where the amateur lives.

Following this format, 4-land amateurs use the 4th Region

Bureau.

### What to do when someone becomes a SK

It is not necessary ". . . to mail the physical license (ed. to the FCC) but the next of kin should contact the FCC with either a death certificate or obituary and letter asking the license be cancelled." Among other reasons for this, it prevents a pirate from stealing the call and using it with impunity until the term of the call expires.

The second action to take is to notify the ARRL Silent Key Administrator ([sk@arrl.org](mailto:sk@arrl.org)). This notification should include a copy of the obituary or other means to establish the accuracy of the report and the call sign.

Why the need to confirm the report? I think it was W. C.

Fields who one time said, "The report of my death has been greatly exaggerated." The fact is that none of us wishes to be involved in reporting the death of a friend or acquaintance when they have not died!

In the case of ARRL members, their loved ones are eligible to receive QST and other ARRL periodicals, if they wish, that had been going to the SK.

### Members only choices

This is just a reminder that there are a number of e-publications and forms of messages that are available to ARRL members. Essentially all of these are opt-in or opt-out depending on one's preference. Go to Members Only at [arrl.org](http://arrl.org) to make your selections -- in or out. I certainly hope you continue to opt-in on receiving these messages from me as well as from your Section Manager.

Of particular noteworthiness is the fact that HQ on fairly rare occasion partners with outside companies that provide services of value to amateurs. When this happens, you are likely to receive an e-mail from HQ that promotes the partnership. You can opt-in or opt-out of receiving these messages.

### Tentative Schedule

2008

Feb 10: Mansfield, OH Hamfest - Gary & Jim

Mar 5: Miami Valley ARA Meeting

Mar 15: Bellbrook ARC Dinner

Apr 2: Lake County ARC, Painesville, OH - Jim

Apr 14: PCARS (OH) Meeting - Jim

Apr 22: Quarterly Division Cabinet Teleconference, 9 PM

May 16-18: Dayton Hamvention(TM) - Gary & Jim

Jun 21: Milford, OH, Hamfest - Jim

Jul QST 'til noon Aug 8: Nominations for Director/Vice Director open.



# QSL Card of the Month

## Submitted by:

Mark Volstad, AI4BJ

## Comments:

One afternoon a few years ago, I was scanning the 20M phone band when I came across a YL calling CQ. That alone was enough to get my attention, but my curiosity was further piqued when I heard her VE9 callsign, since I had lived in the province of New Brunswick back in the 70s — it's where graduated from high school. I answered her CQ, and I mentioned that I was a former resident of the province.

"Oh really?", she replied. "I live in a small town outside of Saint John." (Saint John is the largest city in New Brunswick.)

"Cool!", I said. "We also lived in a small town near Saint John — Gondola Point. But Gondola Point has since amalgamated with Quispamsis."

"No kidding? That's where my husband and I live!"

"Wow, that really is a coincidence! We used to live in the Sherwood Park subdivision."

"That's amazing! We live in Sherwood Park!"

It turned out that Izabell and her husband lived just a couple of streets from where I lived as a teenager. The coincidences didn't

Best 73s and Good DX Pse QSL

# VE9IMF

Izabell M. Fagan  
113 Doncaster Drive  
Quispamsis NB  
Canada, E2E 1R3

Confirming QSO with	Date (Z)	UTC	Freq / 2XMode	Pwr Out	Report
AI4BJ	4/23/04	2218	14.172	100w	59

Mark,

Well, The world just keeps getting smaller and smaller ...

Great to talk to someone from here who lives in an area we love to travel and which holds so many great memories for us. Take care and drop in if you're home - you do know where we are!

Best 73's Izabell.

end there, either. Izabell informed me that she and her husband had travelled extensively in the U.S. (in a motor home or with a camper, if I recall correctly), and that Kentucky was their favorite destination. Like Izabell wrote in her QSL, it really is a small world, and ham radio can make it seem even smaller!

*If you have a special QSL card you would like to share, submit it to the Feedline editor, along with any comments you would like included.*

Return to:  
Northern Ky. Amateur Radio Club  
P.O. Box 1062  
Covington, Ky. 41012

**FIRST  
CLASS**

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